6 PUBLIC SERVICES (FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE)

The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate potential impacts on fire protection and emergency response services resulting from the proposed mine expansion project. For the purpose of this chapter, emergency response includes paramedic services. Potential impacts on other public services including water and wastewater, law enforcement, and solid waste were determined in initial evaluations to be less than significant and are therefore described in Section 1.4, Effects Not Found to be Significant. Information regarding the service area, fire station locations, staffing, and equipment was obtained from direct correspondence and personal communications with the relevant agencies. The potential impacts evaluated in this chapter include increased response times and increased demand for long-term fire protection services.

6.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Patterson mine site is located within both Placer and Yuba counties. Therefore, fire protection services and emergency response is provided by two separate agencies: the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) through its Nevada-Yuba-Placer County Ranger Unit from Placer County, the Wheatland-Plumas-Brophy Fire District from Yuba County, and American Medical Response (AMR). Primary response to the Patterson mine site occurs from CDF and AMR in Placer County because calls for service at the Patterson mine site originate from the mine office, which is located within Placer County. The Wheatland-Plumas-Brophy Fire District is available as backup support to CDF operations at the Patterson mine site, as needed.

Initial response to the Sheridan area, including the Patterson mine site, is provided by Fire Station 70, located at 301 Oak Tree Lane in Lincoln, California, approximately 12 miles south of Sheridan. Two permanent full-time staff members are available at this station to provide fire protection and emergency response services 24 hours a day; four firefighting personnel are present during fire season, generally April through late October or early November. Available equipment includes one engine and support vehicles (including water tenders) during winter months and two engines and support vehicles during the fire season (Clarabut, pers. comm., 2004). The average response time to the Patterson mine site is approximately 20 minutes (Clarabut, pers. comm., 2004). This is longer than the recommended Placer County standard of 10 minutes for rural areas (see Section 6.2 below) (Placer County 1994).

Backup fire protection and emergency response to the Patterson mine site is provided by three separate stations in Yuba County, depending upon the type of services needed. The Wheatland station, located at 313 Main Street in Wheatland, approximately 3 miles north of Sheridan, provides standard and heavy rescue and fire protection services. The Spenceville and Dairy Road stations provide fire protection services. The Spenceville station is located on Eric Lane in Yuba County, approximately 7 miles northwest of Sheridan. The Dairy Road station is located at 4514 Dairy Road in Wheatland, approximately 4 miles north of Sheridan. Each station has one permanent full-time staff member plus volunteers. An engine (pumper) is available at each of the stations. The Wheatland station has two emergency rescue trucks, one for standard rescues and the other for heavy rescues. The Spenceville and

Dairy Road stations, each have a water tender (Bradshaw, pers. comm., 2001). Response times vary depending upon the station, time of day, traffic, and other factors (Bradshaw, pers. comm., 2001).

Supplemental fire protection services are provided through the Sheridan Fire County Service Area, which consists of a volunteer fire company based out of an existing fire station located at the corner of Riosa Road and SR 65. The station is located approximately 3 miles from the Patterson mine site. Response times to the site vary, however, as volunteers do not stand by in the station, but wear pagers and respond from home or work when called (Clarabut, pers. comm., 2004).

Initial paramedic response to the Sheridan area, including the project site, is provided by AMR Unit 210, located at 420 E Street in Lincoln, approximately 10 miles south of Sheridan. The unit has crews available 24 hours a day to provide paramedic services year round. When a paramedic truck responds to a call, a replacement paramedic truck become available to the unit, thus providing continuous paramedic services. Response times to the Patterson mine site average less than 15 minutes depending on time of day, traffic, and other factors. CDF Fire Station 70 and AMR Unit 210 are dispatched simultaneously to an emergency (Silvas, pers. comm., 2001).

The CDF Nevada-Yuba-Placer County Ranger Unit is funded by each respective county government through state property taxes levied throughout the service area and fire facilities mitigation fees assessed at the time a building permit is granted. Within Placer County, CDF operates on an approximate budget of $800,000 to $1 million for four full-time stations: Colfax, Auburn, Alta, and Lincoln (Clarabut, pers. comm., 2004). In addition, CDF also maintains up to 30 volunteers for Fire County Service Areas throughout unincorporated Placer County.

6.2 REGULATORY BACKGROUND

The Placer County General Plan contains certain policies that address provision of public services. A detailed discussion of applicable Placer County General Plan policies, including an analysis of the project's consistency with these policies, is provided in Chapter 4, Land Use/Agriculture. Specific to fire protection services, Placer County General Plan Policy 4.I.2 (Placer County 1994) states:

> The County shall encourage local fire protection agencies in the county to maintain the following standards (expressed as average response times to emergency calls):
>
> a. 4 minutes in urban areas
> b. 6 minutes in suburban areas
> c. 10 minutes in rural areas

6.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, the proposed project would have a significant impact related to fire protection and emergency response if it would:

- result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for fire protection services;
- impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; or
- expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands.

PROJECT IMPACTS

Impact **6-1**

Potential for Increased Response Times*. The proposed mine expansion project would not result in increases in response times when compared with current conditions. Mine-related activities including mining, processing, and reclamation would occur on the Patterson mine site. In addition, the production rates with the proposed asphalt batch plant would not change substantially from the existing operation, and therefore would not create any additions of mine-related truck trips to local roadways. This impact is considered* ***less than significant****.*

CDF Fire Station 70 and AMR Unit 210, located in Lincoln, are currently able to respond to the Patterson mine site in approximately 15–20 minutes. Although this is longer than the Placer County General Plan's recommended standard of 10 minutes to rural areas of the county, the proposed mine expansion project would not substantially increase response times over current response times. As discussed in Chapter 7, Traffic, the number of truck trips would not be expected to increase substantially.

Mining and processing operations associated with the proposed mine expansion project would incorporate facilities and methods similar to those currently used. The proposed asphalt batch plant would be incorporated within the overall scope of current processing and offsite transport operations. Aggregate material would be transported directly to the asphalt batch plant from other onsite processing facilities and would not require the use of public roads or facilities that could impede traffic flow along Camp Far West Road. The asphalt batch plant, however, would result in an average of two additional truck trips per day (i.e., liquid asphalt delivery vehicles). These additional truck trips would not represent a substantial increase in traffic. Furthermore, the Sheridan Fire County Service Area, which includes a volunteer fire company based at a fire station located approximately 3 miles southwest of the Patterson mine site, would continue to support fire protection and emergency response services at the Patterson mine site. Response times vary, as volunteers wear pagers and respond from home or work when called (Clarabut, pers. comm., 2004). However, response times would not be expected to increase as a result of mine related activities. This impact is considered less than significant.

Impact **6-2**

Potential Increased Need for Long-term Fire Protection and Emergency Response Services. *The proposed project would not substantially increase the need for fire protection*

and emergency response services over existing conditions and is not expected to require the construction of new fire or emergency service facilities. Because the proposed AAPR would be reduced from existing rates, the overall number of mine-related truck trips on local roadways would not increase; therefore, accidents involving mine-related trucks are not expected to increase. As with any industrial facility, fires or accidents could occur occasionally at the new asphalt batch plant. However, fire accidents at the mine site are not expected to increase substantially in frequency beyond existing conditions. The proposed project is not expected to require additional fire protection or emergency equipment or services beyond those required for the existing mining operation. The proposed project therefore would not substantially increase the need for additional fire protection or emergency services or facilities. This impact is considered ***less than significant****.*

Because of the proposed extension of the mine's operational life, the proposed project could result in the need for fire protection and emergency response services for a longer period. However, the proposed AAPR, including the proposed asphalt batch plant, would be reduced from 1.5 million tons to 1.25 million tons, thereby reducing the overall number of mine-related truck trips on local roadways from existing conditions, as discussed in Chapter 7, Traffic. Because of the reduction in mine-related truck trips, the number of accidents involving mine-related trucks is not expected to increase over existing conditions. Therefore, project-related truck trips on local roadways under the proposed project would not increase the need for additional fire protection or emergency response services or facilities.

Additionally, the proposed project would include construction and operation of a new asphalt batch plant. As with any industrial facility, including the current mining operation, fires or accidents could occur at the asphalt batch plant. Such incidents are not expected to increase substantially in frequency beyond the frequency of occurrence for the existing mining operation. The proposed project, therefore, is not expected to substantially increase the need for additional fire protection or emergency services, and is not expected to require construction of new fire or emergency service facilities. This impact is considered less than significant.

6.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures are necessary for the following *less-than-significant* impacts.

6-1: Potential for Increased Response Times
6-2: Potential Increased Need for Long-term Fire Protection and Emergency Response Services

6.5 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

No significant impacts related to fire protection and emergency response would result from implementation of the proposed project.